

STORIES FROM THE FRONT LINES: HEMI-SYNC® IN FAMILY THERAPY

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Debra D. Davis has practiced as a counselor for nineteen years and is licensed in Texas as a professional counselor and marriage and family therapist. Her caseload includes contract counseling with a community agency, consultation with entrepreneurs seeking to more productively manage their business and personal relationships, and private clients. Attending the Gateway Voyage® and Guidelines® made Debra aware of the potential for using Hemi-Sync in her work. She has been a Professional Member since spring 1995.

My stories come from a variety of sources. I find it's necessary to check periodically on how each person is using the tapes. Seldom do any of my clients, colleagues, family, or friends truly realize the uniqueness and potential value of the Hemi-Sync sound technology. At first some of them say that they have tried "some of those relaxation tapes and cds with nature sounds." I ask if they are Monroe Institute tapes, and usually they're not. Then I demonstrate and explain the tones that make The Monroe Institute tapes and cds unique. *Time Out for Sleep* is my favorite for this purpose. Those who immediately experience a definite and dramatic change with their first use of Hemi-Sync are more inclined to keep using it regularly. Most of the time, however, changes seem like they might be due to some other influence—at least for a while. Casually, I encourage them to experiment by noting any differences when they skip a day, night, or more of listening. It is sometimes hard to determine for sure what combination of influences is responsible. It seems like we need to prove to ourselves many times that something so simple and effortless can create such profound changes for the better.

A client who has worked with me off and on for nearly twenty years recently told me she had just made a connection between smoking her last cigarette before surgery seven years ago and having used the *Surgical Support Series*. She listened to the tapes prior to and for four weeks following the surgery. I had only inquired about the surgery and her recovery at the time and was pleased that she came through it remarkably well and with little use of pain medication. She described trying to quit smoking numerous times and even stopping for up to three years—only to begin again under stress. She remembered thinking she'd like to smoke a cigarette about two weeks after she stopped listening to the tapes. The thought that followed, immediately and effortlessly, was, "Well, I've gone this long without a cigarette. I guess I can go without one for the rest of my life." And now it's been seven years!

A mother in a prolonged and extremely stressful situation took *Surf*, *Catnapper*, *Cloudscapes*, and *Remembrance* on trial. She reported that her young daughter was lying, stealing, sleeping poorly, and crying about being alone at bedtime, as well as acting jealous of her younger

brother (teasing him and being babyish, insisting on all the attention even if it was negative). The dark circles under their eyes testified to their mutual exhaustion. The mother returned the tapes two weeks later at our next scheduled appointment with the comment, "They didn't do any good." Mother and daughter both looked rested and were acting more congenial with one another, so I asked for specifics about any changes in the previously reported problems. Mom said that the crying, lying, and stealing had stopped. Her daughter was sleeping through the night and had no problems at bedtime. She started to smile at me midway through this litany. "Oh, I see what you mean. I've also been able to set up a chart of chores and spell out the consequences clearly for not accomplishing them. Plus, I'm now being consistent with it." The child seemed relieved as she hugged me at the beginning and end of the session. Several months passed, and I did another follow-up to see which tapes they were using and how frequently. Once again there were a number of complaints about the child's behavior. When I probed further it turned out they'd discontinued the tapes for several weeks. I recommended *Portraits* for sleep and suggested starting each morning with *Remembrance*. Unsurprisingly, things smoothed out within a week after tape use resumed.

Surgery was necessary for a client's mother who is in her early eighties. Three weeks later my client checked on her mother and found that she was stoically bearing severe pain. My client insisted that her mother make a doctor's appointment for the next morning, then called me to see if *Pain Control* was available. The client had had great success with the *Surgical Support Series* weeks before. I gave her *Pain Control* plus *Energy Walk*. Listening to *Pain Control* that night gave her mother the first full night's sleep since the surgery. According to my client, her mother commented, "There's something in that, something to it. I didn't hear a lot of it. I went sound asleep and was okay. I slept from 10:00 P.M. to 6:15 A.M. I'm usually up two or three times at night. The pain's gone." Her mother then postponed seeing the doctor until two days later when it was more convenient. The morning of the appointment she listened to *Pain Control* once more and was pain free when she saw her physician. Several weeks later my frustrated client was exclaiming, "If it weren't for Hemi-Sync, I don't think my mother would be surviving now. Yet, just this past weekend—as mother and I were driving in the car—I became aware she was stiffening up periodically and breathing in sharply. I asked her if she were in pain and she reluctantly agreed. I asked her if she had tried using the Hemi-Sync numbers cue. She said she had, but it wasn't working. I knew by now to ask how she was using it. Sure enough, she wasn't breathing in, focusing on the painful area, thinking the numbers, then exhaling through her mouth. I insisted she practice it as it had been coded and hold the thought that it had been successful many times before and could be again. She finally did and was pain free for five days. Then she forgets to use it! It is so frustrating to me when it is so easy and there are no side effects as with medication."

Two sisters, ages eight and five, had endured over three years of a horrendous custody battle—primarily between their father and their maternal grandmother. The final court date was coming up in a few weeks. Although the father and stepmother were careful not to discuss

adult business in front of the children, the grandmother and mother were manipulating them shamelessly with inappropriate information. The stress level was building, creating sleeplessness, nightmares, and a constant state of discomfort for the girls. When the stepmother called for help, I sent them home with *Flying Free*, *Sleepy Locust*, *Cloudscapes*, and *Surf*. The parents said the first two worked great and the other two not at all. It's possible that the children needed to hear a male voice to ground and comfort them, and that the other two tapes gave them nothing on which to focus their minds, creating anxiety. Curiously, once the crisis was over and the adults were behaving themselves for the first time in years, the girls didn't want to listen to the tapes at all anymore. Perhaps they were reminders of a very bad time? *Remembrance* is still used for homework, however.

A mom and her teenage daughter were having problems. The father had been barred from the home months before for molesting his daughter. The daughter had not received counseling at that point and was exhibiting depressive symptoms. She cried easily, frequently avoided her friends, and was short-tempered with her mom and brothers. *Remembrance* and *Deep 10 Relaxation* were provided with instructions to saturate themselves in Hemi-Sync night and day. The next week revealed remarkable changes in both of them. The mom said her daughter was more relaxed (as was she) and actually wanted to listen to the tapes. She even made time to listen to them. The daughter yelled less at her mom and brothers. The school year ended and the routine changed. The daughter stopped listening to the tapes and within two weeks was experiencing distress. Asked to rate her own sense of well-being on a scale of one to ten, she said when she first came to counseling it was between two and three. That rating increased to between eight and nine while listening to the tapes regularly. Presently, she felt she had slipped to between a six and seven. Summer school began the next day and would introduce a regular routine. It was clear to her that the tapes had a positive influence on an inner level, helped her focus, and as she put it, "knock me out at night." Amazingly, only two weeks later she reported being "too busy to listen to the tapes lately" and ranked her sense of well-being at around a four. This gave me an opportunity to explore why she wasn't listening. It helped open up other facets of the issues we'd examined before but now needed to address in more depth.

Recently I had one session with a mother and daughter. The daughter is fifteen years old and had been hospitalized owing to suicide threats. It was her second hospital admission in two weeks. During the session the pair argued constantly. Most of the time the daughter stayed curled in a fetal position in her chair, clearly in a great deal of distress. She had recently made an outcry against prolonged sexual abuse initiated at age seven by a stepfather who had threatened murder if she told. The female voice on *Energy Walk* seemed like a good choice for her. To fill the mother's need for support, I chose *Deep 10 Relaxation*. I knew intuitively that *Remembrance* needed to be played in the car and constantly in the background at home. Things were so bad that nothing would be accomplished in counseling without tape homework. In the month before we could schedule the next session, I checked on them weekly by phone.

They were using the tapes, said that they “loved” them, that the daughter was “really” improving and much calmer, and that they were getting along better.

On the second visit the daughter confessed that she disliked the talking on *Energy Walk*, but listened anyway because generally she felt so much better afterward. They took *Portraits* home and returned the other three titles. The mother planned to purchase them with her next paycheck. Mother and daughter seemed like completely different people at that second session. They talked amicably about even the very difficult subjects. The daughter never once assumed a fetal position, eye contact was direct, and she was much more relaxed. When they returned for the third time, the daughter said that *Portraits* did not work well. She would awaken feeling that someone was knocking somewhere in the house and walking through her room. She immediately startled even if her mother came in to check on her during the night. So we are currently experimenting with *Surf* and Metamusic® Artist Volume 2 containing *Prisms* and *Midsummer Night*.

The mother’s paramour had complained about her listening to the tapes. Then came a week without them. He asked if she was on her way to counseling. Upon confirmation, he asked her to borrow the tapes for another week until they could buy them on payday. This woman can also dispense with water retention and nerve medications when she is on a consistent Hemi-Sync regimen. She perceives a dramatic difference with the audio support.

Now Hemi-Sync plays during all of my sessions and creates an ambiance in which counselor and client can accomplish more on many levels. I have seen repeatedly that most people need the tapes. My part is to follow up and find out how and when they are using them. Asking, “What has changed?” with a relaxed and interested attitude, enables clients to see connections between using the tapes and differences in their lives that might be attributed to Hemi-Sync.

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